

**Serious and Violent Offender ReEntry Initiative
State of New Jersey Workplan Clarifications—Young Adults
2002-RE-CX-0021**

DETERMINE PROBLEMS TO BE ADDRESSED

No more than 300 young adult offenders will participate in this initiative. Young adults under the jurisdiction of the Juvenile Justice Commission (JJC) are subject to a review by the Parole Board every ninety days after they have met or passed their judicial restriction date. Moreover, after a judgment by the Board to grant parole has been made, young adults may be released within days of this decision. Therefore, due to extremely short turn-around times between judicial restriction and parole, parole case plans for juveniles are usually developed just after a young adult enters the system.

Once young adults under the jurisdiction of the JJC complete parole, they are required to complete a period of post-incarceration supervision. In total, young adult offenders under the jurisdiction of the JJC may be on parole/post-incarceration supervision anywhere from a month to eighteen months, depending. This makes case management and planning difficult at best.

We have determined that approximately 300 young adult offenders will either be on parole/post-incarceration supervision or will have judicial restriction dates that make them eligible for release and for this program. For purposes of this initiative, we have defined 'confinement' as the period of time served by any juvenile residing in a JJC facility under a sentence of commitment by a Superior Court Judge, Chancery Division, Family Part, including any pre-dispositional credit served in a county detention facility.

As with our adult ReEntry initiative, we have extended the length of the institutional component of our program so that we may better plan and assess those offenders who will participate in our initiative. Assessments on juveniles are far more comprehensive than those for adults. Our focus in extending the institutional component for the Young Adult ReEntry initiative is to provide more time and opportunity to create and implement better, more comprehensive case plans for those being released to the community.

Our revised work plan has been revised to begin our institutional component on January 1, 2003. Participants in ReEntry will be released to the community beginning October, 2003-April, 2004. All other program elements remain the same.

DETERMINE GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

These goals and objectives are the same as for the adult population we will service.

Reduce re-arrest and absconder rates of participants (assessed monthly): Our initiative will have achieved some measure of success if rates of re-arrest and the number of participants who abscond is reduced. Our goal is to facilitate the successful reintegration of these offenders on a long-term basis. Fewer arrests of participants is certainly one measure of how successful or not we are at accomplishing this task.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: Parole officers will routinely check state and local police databases to determine whether or not offenders have been rearrested. Should an offender be rearrested, the officer will intercede and take appropriate steps.

Reduction in violent crime (assessed monthly): If we can achieve reduced rates of violent crime in Camden and Essex Counties committed by offenders participating in the reentry initiative, then we will have achieved some measure of success.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: Routine record checks by parole officers of offenders participating in this initiative will reveal whether or not offenders are engaging in crime, and if so, what type of crime.

Offender accountability (assessed monthly): We believe that offenders must be held accountable for their actions and that increased accountability will result in more successful parole outcomes. In an effort to assess accountability, accountability sessions will take place at local churches and will be chaired by the Chairman of the Parole Board or a designated representative—usually a Board member. Parole officers, service providers, the Chairman and parolees will participate in sessions that assess parolee participation and offer the opportunity for parolees to address grievances, questions, or comments to the Chairman personally. The emphasis will be on holding service providers and offenders accountable for delivering and participating constructively in appropriate services. Family members will be encouraged to attend and participate to encourage continual family communication and cohesion.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: ReEntry program participants will be told that participation in accountability sessions is required. Parole Officers will be present at these accountability sessions and will be able to determine whether or not their clients are in attendance. Parole officers will follow up with offenders who do not attend and will take appropriate action.

Community wellness (assessed monthly): Community wellness meetings will address community concerns about parole and will be spearheaded by local ministries and other community organizations who wish to participate. Parole Board members will also attend.

The idea is to encourage community participation in the reintegration of offenders by dispelling myths about offenders and addressing community concerns about crime and other issues in a constructive and organized fashion.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: Surveys will be provided to community members who attend meetings to discern what issues are of concern, to measure fear of crime in the neighborhood, issues related to public safety, and to determine community commitment to participation in this program. Follow-up surveys will be taken at subsequent meetings and will be utilized to measure change in concerns/attitude over time. The location of these meetings will be determined by geo-coding ReEntry offender residences and developing geographic boundaries.

Increased public safety (assessed monthly): One of our primary goals is to increase public safety through increased supervision and comprehensive treatment of serious and violent offenders. We believe that communities will be and feel safer through participation in this initiative.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: Please see above description.

Decrease in fear/increased sense of justice on the part of the community (assessed monthly): Decreases in fear of crime often result in increases in a sense of justice and an increased sense of community wellness. These goals are in turn linked to reductions in violent crime and increased community wellness.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: Please see above description.

Encourage offenders to become productive and responsible citizens (assessed monthly): We believe that the comprehensive menu of services that we will be able to offer juvenile and adult offenders will increase offenders' ability to become productive and responsible citizens. More people with more jobs and job skills will result in more people paying taxes and contributing to the infrastructure of the community.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: Program participation and outcome will be tracked by the individual program and treatment providers and by the MDTs through the case-conference meetings that will be held bi-weekly. Benchmarks such as program and treatment completion, getting a job, and remaining crime free will be measures related to successful reintegration into the community.

Actively address substance abuse and mental health needs (assessed monthly): A large proportion of juvenile and adult serious and violent offenders present with some sort of substance abuse or mental health problem, therefore making effective provision of these

services critical. Community participation in addressing the link between substance abuse, mental health issues, and crime is paramount to our success.

Specific Method of Goal Measurement: Please see above description.

SELECT TARGET POPULATIONS/HIGH-RISK OFFENDERS
(See Attachment 1)

As described above, all of the young adult offenders chosen for this initiative will be on parole/post-incarceration supervision or have judicial restriction dates that make them eligible for this program. Because of the nature of this population, lengthy terms of evaluation may not be possible. We have excluded from participation anyone who will be on parole/post-incarceration supervision for a month or less during the recruitment period. Inclusion criteria for this population include:

- Young adult offenders must be returning to Camden or Essex counties.
- Young adult offenders are between the ages of 14-23

Our program is predicated on the carrot-stick approach. Offenders who meet the above and are paroled or on post-incarceration supervision during the period of the grant will participate in the ReEntry initiative as a special condition of their parole. Through notification sessions, offenders will be told of the opportunities that are available to them. They will also be told that should they fail to participate in ReEntry or commit a new crime, prosecution will be swift and certain.

DETERMINE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY/DECISION-MAKERS
(See Attachment 2)

All of the decision-makers noted below have equal decision-making authority. They are all routinely asked to join in meetings related to the development and implementation of this program.

Head of local substance abuse agency
Head of local mental health agency
Heads of local faith-based and community-based organizations
Chief elected official(s) in area(s) being served
Chief judge(s) of local community judiciary
Head of local community corrections agency
Chief law-enforcement officer(s) representing the local community(s)
Chair of local Workforce Investment Board
Head of local education agency

School superintendent and/or official of a local college
Head of local evaluation agency or appropriate evaluator
County Youth Services Commission Administrator

At the state level, all of the following agencies are asked to join together to participate in the development and implementation of this program.

Head of State adult or juvenile correctional agency
Head of State parole board
Head of state substance abuse treatment agency
Head of state mental health agency
Head of state education agency
Head of state agency charged with criminal justice system evaluations
Head of state Workforce Investment Board
Heads of faith-based, community-based, or other service organizations
Head of Victims of Crime Compensation Board

Everyone at the local and state levels who participates in this program is given equal decision-making authority. Currently, we are in the process of developing and formalizing MOUs with local substance abuse, mental health, faith-based, labor, and education agencies. We are also seeking to reinforce our partnerships with victims of crime and offenders' families.

INSTITUTIONALLY-BASED PROGRAMS: TRANSITION TEAM (See Attachment 3)

The young adult MDTs will be comprised of representatives from parole, substance abuse, mental health, education, and other treatment and service agencies as deemed appropriate. The number of MDT members will not exceed eight. The caseload manager will be predetermined by the team itself. The onus of responsibility for ensuring that the offender participates in predetermined programs and services will fall to the parole officer since participation in ReEntry is a special condition of parole.

INSTITUTIONALLY-BASED PROGRAMS: INSTITUTIONAL PROGRAMS/SERVICES (See Attachment 4)

Currently, young adults in secure facilities in New Jersey are assessed for need and risk at entry and are bound by law to participate in educational programs. Other, vocational and treatment programs are offered and available. As with the adults, young adult offenders who are not currently participating in programs will be given top priority. We believe that the number of young adult offenders who are not participating in programs is very small.

COMMUNITY-BASED TRANSITION: REENTRY AUTHORITY
(See Attachment 5)

Our hope is that offender's will see the benefit these programs provide to themselves and to their families and will be encouraged to attend. The offender's case manager will be the first line of defense in encouraging the offender to participate, but ultimately it will fall to the parole officer to enforce the conditions of parole. The parole officer is the conduit through which the MDT will have the authority to enforce the conditions of an offender's reentry plan. Should an offender not comply with the conditions set forth by his/her parole officer, they will be in violation of their parole and the parole officer will be able to take the necessary steps to remediate an offender's behavior.

COMMUNITY-BASED TRANSITION: CONTINUUM OF SERVICES
(See Attachment 6)

Meeting young adult offender's housing needs will be particularly challenging. Due to the nature of this population, and the restrictions attached to taking a young adult from parents, relatives, or foster parents, we are somewhat limited in our responses to young adults' housing needs. We currently contract with a community corrections agency who runs a facility to temporarily house young adult offenders. We are currently working with several other community corrections agencies to leverage space in their facilities to use for placement cases and others who may require different housing needs. We plan to expand this program so that by the end of the grant period, a more comprehensive system is in place.

Several offenders in our cohort suffer from co-occurring disorders. We plan to approach treatment of these disorders through cross-training staff in substance abuse and mental health. Our plan is to develop a core group of treatment specialists who are qualified to deal with co-occurring disorders and who will be able to treat these individuals statewide.

We are planning to implement a chaplaincy program that begins while the offender is still incarcerated and continues once the offender is released into the community. Faith-based mentors will go to institutions where ReEntry participants will reside and begin to help prepare these individuals for release. Once the offender is released, the faith-based mentorship program will continue their work with the offender out in the community, providing spiritual and basic mentorship guidance to those who request it.

We are working closely with the Department of Labor (DOL) and local WIBs to develop and streamline a process by which our offenders can avail themselves of the services offered by these agencies.

COMMUNITY-BASED LONG TERM SUPPORT: SELF-SUFFICIENCY
PLANNING (See Attachment 7)

We view this grant as the opportunity to implement long-needed fundamental changes in the way that discharge planning and parole functions with regard to young adults in the State of New Jersey.

We are in the midst of rolling out a new and improved risk and needs assessment protocol that will be administered to all individuals entering JJC secure facilities. These assessments will be utilized to develop a better and more comprehensive case management plan that will be in place and ready to implement, once a young adult offender has been granted parole.

Furthermore, better and more streamlined linkages between the institutional staff and parole/transitional services staff will result in more effective case management and treatment and service provision.

COMMUNITY-BASED LONG TERM SUPPORT: ORGANIZE PROJECT MANAGEMENT (See Attachment 8)

This may well be our biggest challenge. In the past, state agencies have been reluctant to work together and organizations at the local level have continually vied for what little resource dollars were available from the state. Recently, agencies and organizations at all levels have come to realize that collaboration and partnership are the only ways in which we will be able to combat what we all perceive to be our biggest problem: increased numbers of offenders are returning to communities with little or no treatment and service support thereby increasing the likelihood of recidivism or the commission of new crime.

This grant is one of the first opportunities that agencies and organizations at the state and local level have had to come together to try to combat this problem. We believe that cross-training will result in treatment and service providers that are better able to handle young adult offenders who have committed serious and violent offenses. Moreover, we believe that linkages formed between the JJC and NJSPB and NJDOC will result in greater information-sharing and for novel program development and implementation.

DEVELOP PROJECT BUDGET: SUSTAINABILITY

We plan to utilize Rutgers University to conduct our program and process evaluations. We believe that our affiliation with Rutgers (the genesis of the Greater Newark Safer Cities Initiative) provides us with the academic rigor and integrity that will be required to conduct an evaluation that is reliable and valid. Furthermore, because of the relationship between Rutgers and GNSCI, evaluators will be intimately familiar with program function and purpose.